

clevedale veterinary practice: autumn newsletter 2009

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Fluke Warning

Historically, most Fluke infections have affected the west side of the country. In the last few years we have seen a steady increase in our area due to increasing rainfall which has provided the wet areas required for the mud snail (needed for Fluke development).

More recently we have seen a surge in associated problems and feel the need to highlight this parasite as a potential threat to the efficiency of your units.

Fluke (*Fasciola hepatica*) is a parasite affecting mainly the livers of sheep and cattle. Although most people are aware of the classical sign of "bottle jaw", more common effects include weight loss, reduced weight gain, reduced fertility, reduced milk production and death.

Control involves use of flukicides (ensuring the correct choice of drug as not all products are effective against all stages of disease), avoiding and reducing snail habitats and considering a quarantine and treatment strategy to reduce the chances of buying infection in.

Information sheets are available from the office at Upleatham but we would also like to invite you to a meeting at the **Ugthorpe Lodge** on the evening of **14th October** at **7.30pm** where we will explain more fully the implications of Fluke infection and the control options available. Please let us know if you will be attending to make sure there's enough food for everyone!

Interherd

The dairy farmers amongst you might be interested to know we have invested in the computer programme "Interherd" which will allow us to access NMR and CIS data on your

farms; this will help us improve health, fertility and nutritional advice. Some of this information is already available to you on-line using your User-name and Password but this investment will allow access to more detailed analyses. For those of you interested in comparing your performance with others, it will also offer the ability to benchmark both within the Practice and Nationally. To further explain the benefits of utilising the information already available to you on-line as well as the full Interherd programme, we will be hosting a meeting over lunchtime on the **10th of December** at the **Jolly Sailor Inn** on the A174 just outside Moorsholm.

Winter Meeting Programme

Following on from the successful Lameness seminars held in February, we are organising a series of meetings through the winter which we hope as many of you as possible will find of interest and wish to attend:

1st Oct Infectious Disease and Health Planning
11am - 2pm, inc lunch - Jolly Sailor
14th Oct Fluke: The importance of control -
7.30pm inc supper - Ugthorpe Lodge
26th Nov Dairy Cattle Fertility 11am - 2pm inc
lunch - Jolly Sailor
10th Dec Interherd / Making the most of herd
data 11am - 2pm inc lunch - Jolly Sailor

If you are interested in attending any of these meetings then we would be grateful if you could let the office know so that we can ensure there is a sandwich with your name on it. Further meetings for the New Year will be announced later in the autumn – if there are topics you would like to see covered, please feel free to let us know.

Interesting Case

We recently investigated an outbreak of cataracts in new-born calves. Seen occasionally in the odd calf, this outbreak involved 9 dairy calves born one after the other to a variety of bulls. BVD is often blamed for this disorder but the farm in question tested completely free of the virus. Further investigations could only suggest that the feeding of some mouldy forage during pregnancy may have caused a toxic insult causing the cataracts. Mouldy feed is a recognised cause of problems in stock, notably Listeriosis caused by the bacteria *Listeria monocytogenes* and abortion from *Bacillus lichenaeformis*. It would appear one of the many toxins associated with mouldy feed was likely to have been the cause of this interesting outbreak.



How biosecure are you?

Bulk milk disease analysis is a useful tool for determining the absence or presence of certain diseases in a dairy herd. Last year we identified a herd naive for IBR. Biosecurity was decided as the preferred method of control over vaccination. Unfortunately, despite best efforts to keep a closed herd, heifers that were away for summer grazing came into contact with other cattle. Within 2 weeks of one these heifers returning to the main farm, the milking herd started showing signs of IBR, including milk drop. The herd-owner estimated he lost a third of his milk over the following 2 weeks and subsequent fertility effects are still being felt.

In contrast, another herd found to be negative for BVDV was vaccinated and subsequently avoided potential infertility problems when the farm to which their heifers were sent for summer grazing itself went down with BVDV - a lesson perhaps in just how easy it is to bring in disease even in so-called "closed herds" and how cheap vaccination can be when faced with the prospects of the cost of disease.

And finally.....for those of you due to sell calves this Autumn.....some of the bigger buyers consider that pneumonia in calves going into their fattening units is becoming more serious due to the presence of BVD. It has become apparent that calves vaccinated before sale may be more attractive to these buyers if this is announced. A variety of vaccines exist which contain BVD ranging from £4 to £12 per calf depending on whether just BVD is protected against or other pneumonia viruses as well. Whichever vaccine is used, two doses are needed 4 weeks apart. Please speak to Andrew, Babs or Wendy to discuss this further.